

FEMA'S BROKEN PROMISES

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it has been more than 100 days since Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast region, destroying more than 300,000 homes, taking more than 1,300 lives. FEMA promised help, yet, more than 100 days later, thousands of survivors are still living in tents and shelters. More than 100 days later, promised trailers have not arrived. More than 100 days later, a Federal judge has had to force FEMA to extend its deadline.

FEMA is now opting out of 12-month leases. What FEMA won't do, Congress can do. It is time for this Republican Congress to work with Democrats and enact legislation granting 1 year of housing assistance. It is imperative that this be done before we adjourn. Human suffering continues. I am willing to work with those to end this suffering.

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ALITO NOMINATION

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, as the confirmation process of Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito moves from the back burner to center stage in the coming days, we should not allow it to become politicized by the left.

President Bush has nominated a capable and qualified individual to sit on our highest Court. Judge Alito has more judicial experience than any Supreme Court nominee in the last 70 years. He has a reputation as an even-tempered, impartial, fair-minded judge who believes in judicial restraint. The Senate unanimously confirmed Judge Alito to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit in 1990.

Mr. Speaker, as this debate heats up, people should not be fooled by the mischaracterizations and personal attacks that are sure to come from the liberal left wing. Judge Alito is qualified. He deserves an up-or-down vote in the Senate.

REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN IS CONFUSING

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, after this week we will be adjourning, we are told, for about 6 weeks or more in order to accommodate the court schedule in Texas. There are, therefore, some things that we should get done this week.

Many of us opposed the Republican Medicare prescription drug bill because we thought it was a mess. At least we

want it to succeed as best it can for the seniors, but it is so confusing that not even the Bush administration is able to get out the proper information to the very seniors who must make a decision about which plan to choose.

Seniors want help with their ever-increasing prescription drug costs, but they have voiced frustration and confusion over the law that the Republicans passed.

The administration has distributed inaccurate and incomplete information, and Republicans want to penalize any senior who does not sign up for a prescription drug plan by May 15.

Congress should not leave town without giving the seniors at least an additional 6 months to help make a decision that they can live with, that can give them at least some help with their prescription drug costs.

IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING METH PROVISIONS IN PATRIOT ACT

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, meth threatens lives, safety, and health at great cost to all of us. That is why the meth provisions included in the PATRIOT Act reauthorization are so important.

I am pleased this legislation contains several significant provisions I authored, including enhanced criminal penalties originally a part of the anti-meth SLAM Act I introduced with Representative DARLENE HOOLEY. This bill also contains a drug certification provision I authored to stop the flow of meth from Mexico.

I thank Chairmen SENSENBRENNER and SOUDER for their extraordinary leadership in moving this bill to the floor. I urge its swift passage. Doing so will send a strong signal that Congress is serious about fighting the scourge of meth.

We must send a signal to the pushers of this poison that they are not welcome in our communities. We must send a signal to the law enforcement officers who wake up every morning to protect our families that we stand with them in the fight against drugs and will work to give them every tool they need to be successful.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important bill.

OPEC AND ENERGY DEPARTMENT DELIVER MORE BAD NEWS

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, OPEC and the U.S. Energy Department delivered another blow to financially strained American consumers Monday when they announced that high energy prices are here to stay.

During a meeting in Kuwait, OPEC members said they may cut production

of oil, increasing prices here in the U.S. At the same time, U.S. Federal energy forecasters projected the current high gas prices will last until at least 2014. This news comes at a devastating time for millions of families currently struggling to pay mounting home heating costs.

The onset of bitterly cold winter weather in New York City and across this Nation means that many people will have to make difficult sacrifices to afford these added expenses; and yet, Republican leaders in this body recently passed legislation that provides billions of dollars in financial assistance to energy companies, while cutting vital funds from LIHEAP, the low-income home heating assistance program.

Mr. Speaker, this is unconscionable. We should be increasing the LIHEAP funding and assistance and spreading this to the needed families over this holiday season.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR IRAQI ELECTION

(Mr. BASS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, today I commend and congratulate the Iraqi people on the occasion of the election which is going to be held there tomorrow. This election represents not only the successful liberation of the Iraqi people from decades of tyranny and oppression but it also is a great leap forward in solidifying democratic institutions in Iraq.

Perhaps more than our Constitution, our flag or our national anthem, it is our elections that best display the enduring success of our American democracy. From the formation of political parties and ideologies to spirited debates on critical issues, it is the symbolic act of casting ballots that continues to make our democracy a beacon of freedom and prosperity to the global community.

The Iraqi people will now have the opportunity to comprehend what Americans have learned over two centuries, that nations are more stable and more peace loving when a multitude of voices share in its operation.

I am confident that democracy will continue to flourish as Iraqis make their opinions heard, rally in support of their visions, and experience for the first time the many liberties that Americans hold dear.

PATRIOT ACT REAUTHORIZATION

(Mr. MEEHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago, in the wake of September 11, Congress passed the PATRIOT Act to provide law enforcement new tools to protect America from terrorism. The bill was a rushed response and passed in an urgent hour.